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A BALANCE OF NAVAL POWER.

ELIHU BURRITT.

Most persons are familiar with the process by which the monkey in the fable sought to effect a balance between the two pieces of cheese which he was asked to apportion equitably between two litigant cats. All will recollect how that wily arbitrator presided at the scales until he had appropriated to himself the last morsel of the cheese in dispute. We shall find the commerce of the nations wasting away, like those pieces of cheese, under the modern process of establishing a balance of naval power for its protection. One of these powers, Great Britain, for instance, constructs a commerce defender of enormous power, or a war-steamer, called Stromboli, Styx or Bulldog. This fiery mastiff is not unkenelled to hunt pirates. In the application for money to build it, the Secretary of the British Navy, perhaps, referred point blank to the posture and power of France, and even hinted at her disposition to injure the commerce of Great Britain. In fact, this war-steamer is let out like a bulldog, to thrust his nose through the fence of the English Channel, and growl a defiance at France. Well, France has not been asleep the while. She knew the purpose and argument of that war-steamer before its keel was laid. The Secretary of the French Navy has described the danger to which that nation is exposed by the power of sudden invasion or injury which that new war-ship has put into the hands of England. In all haste, the keel of one to match it is laid down at Cherbourg; and before the British mastiff has displayed his teeth for a week upon the sea, a French one of equal power is unkenelled to show his, and growl a defiance. The two nations are now relatively just where they began. They are equally exposed to each other's invasions; perhaps more than they were before their war-steamers left the stocks. At least England has quite as much occasion to send out another sea-mastiff as she had to launch the first. So, the next year, another is turned out upon the sea, to mate its companion in watching that suspicious bull-dog of France. Of course France cannot suffer this disparity, she feels that her coasts and commerce are in greater jeopardy than ever; and, in what she calls the sheer necessity of defence, she draws more deeply upon her revenues and sends out another mastiff with longer teeth and stronger claws. The competition between the two countries for the purpose of *effecting a balance of naval power*, is now fairly under way. When each nation has constructed one hundred war-steamers, they are relatively just where they commenced. Is it not self-evident, that, at this point, they are just as much exposed to each other's attacks as they were before they had a single war-steamer upon the ocean? Is their commerce the whit the more secure than at the beginning of this competition for a balance of naval power to protect it? Then why may we not ask, that the nation which launched the first war-steamer, and thus set on foot this ruinous rivalry between neighboring countries, should lead the way in converting its steam-navy into ships of burden for the transportation of food for man and beast, or for carriers of the *penny post bag* across the ocean?

And yet American statesmen vie with each other to provide an American navy equal to France or England!
—ED.

"Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue,
I have seen her far away, for is not Earth as yet so young?
Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion killed;
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert tilled.
Robed in universal harvest, up to either Pole she smiles,
Universal Ocean softly washing all her Warless Isles."

[From *The Century*.]

THE WHITE CROWN.

HERBERT D. WARD.

Europe is a garrison. Its frontiers are but a succession of fortresses, whose guards are bipedal dogs trained to fret at a strange face or to bite the uninvited guest. Its cities are scientific intrenchments, and its citizens are unwilling recruits.

Spring is not hailed by the powers with poetic enthusiasm, nor is it greeted by the commoners in rhapsodies. The Continental spring may prove not the glad awakener of life but the signal for the final atrocity of high civilization — wholesale murder legalized. For with the new crispness of the grass, the tender buds upon the trees, and the bridal songs of the cuckoo and the lark, come the intricate evolutions of battalions of men taken from the plow, and come the rumors of war. Suspensions, jealousies, hatreds that have hibernated for very cold now creep forth and warm themselves into malignant activity. Frost deprives vipers of their sting and armies of success. Europe breathes a sigh of relief when the winter sets in cold. It trembles at the farmer's prediction of an early spring. It stands guard when the last ice is melted, and apprehensively awaits the mailed gauntlet, ignorant from what quarter the emblem of defiance will be cast. Is the Czar about to execute the dream of his dynasty against Constantinople? Has France intrigued with the Duke of Luxembourg? Or has she bribed Belgium? Or both? What means this new uprising in Bulgaria against the Turkish yoke? Will Austria break her last treaty with Germany, her hereditary foe, and afford Russia a highway for the price of the land filched by Frederick the Great from Maria Theresa? Why has France a standing army of three millions? Does she herself perchance menace, and still cherish the hope of Alsace and Lorraine? Is the German Empire the nut or the cracker?

During the spring of which we write the politics of Europe took to itself an unusually bloody hue. There was a strange restlessness in diplomatic circles which did not fail to communicate itself to the lower classes. It was rumored that the Czar was about to mobilize four army corps upon his western frontier; and it was known that the pneumatic rifle, the secret of which the Russian government had purchased from an American, noiselessly projected its bullet at an initial velocity one-third greater than the smokeless rifles of Austria, Italy, Germany and France. The commination of the Slavs, the nightmare of the Teutonic races, was almost a wakeful reality. An ambassadorial discourtesy, a drunken officer on the frontier, a mistaken dispatch — these were sufficient to fulminate the catastrophe.

The famous remark of a German emperor, "I wish my subjects taught to be Germans, not hoary Romans; soldiers, not near-sighted dreamers," added a new fervor to patriotism. Enormous army-credits were voted by the Reichstag. The war-footing was increased five hundred thousand, and the women turned the clods in the valleys,